6/22/72

Dear Joe,

I just found your pre-departure note about maps so now I know what you asked but don't know whether a map marking the ingress, regress, progress, digress, egress, congress of your characters would "divide attention or lessen authority" or whether a map is patronizing (a book I just read about archeology in U.S. falsely assumed I knew where New Mexico et al are in re Oklahoma). Ara's edition of Kidnapped has a map of David Balfour's wanderings on the back, and the frayed coastline of Scotland, from Mull Island to Cape Wrath, brings up from about 1944 the terror with which, sitting in the window seat in the house at Bay Head, hearing a storm unfurl up the Chesapeake, I read Stevenson, and learned to appreciate safe if not comfortable corners, not to mention hiding places. I like the map of Bleston in Passing Time, actually two identical maps, so that one map becomes the map of the older map, while any map of Bleston becomes overlaid with private maps, emphases, etc.

Now children home for half-day with wild marble game a few feet from my feet/now the mailman with John Willenbecher sending me yr review of The Car Thief so I'll read it while I eat my Campbell's Manhandler's Beef with vegetable and barley soup. Then my nap. We've had two weeks of such rain, today about the cumulative culminating worst. I'm waking up, and in my desomnia think No, no map, unless lines and interstices can subdue sentimentality, because a map of England reeks of five-color-process history, with Joan Fontaine, White Cliffs of Dover, Mrs Miniver, Kathy and Heathcliff, unless it could be computer-generated map, or perhaps NASA photo:

Phoebe walked here

> Other maps are such shapes, with their islands and capes!
> But we've got our brave Captain to thank"
> (So the crew would protest) "that he's bought us the best—
> A perfect and absolute blank!"

***success/failure: "...so that it is the book's ultimate failure after exhaustive efforts to express its theme which is presumed to constitute best evidence of its success in handling it" Nil R.M.Adams re Moby Dick

My mind is returning, on the subject of Mel Bochner's work, myth, religion, continuum, etc. even beauty & dangers thereof, and I'll write you a lecture on anything you name soon. I like your review, and it ought to make Theodore Weesner proud'n happy.

We're off in this rain to the Daitch. Toby says Joan has not replied to her reply expressing willingness to make phone calls & needs data. (I saw John Clem Clarke who offered to give me a print: am I being patronized? should I mind? I haven't even liked the prints I've seen: I don't want accretions, I want illuminations, & carry file cards against the moment they arrive).

Love / Bill